

Now, over the past week, the price of crude oil per barrel has hovered between \$77.15 and \$77.85. These are the lowest per-barrel prices since June of 2012, just over 2 years, a stark contrast to \$145 per barrel in May of 2008.

The Energy Information Administration has projected that gasoline prices at the pump will continue to decline in December to somewhere around \$2.80 a gallon and possibly even lower in 2015.

Additionally, U.S. natural gas prices are roughly \$4.24, as production continues to flourish. This is all welcome news for consumers, businesses, and the economy, from more affordable transportation to heating our homes, from the food we consume to American manufacturing having lower costs, therefore being more competitive globally. Lower energy costs are good for our economy overall.

Now, there are many factors as to why gasoline prices fluctuate. They include international market trends and geopolitical events, as well as weather and impacts upon refining capacity due to natural disasters.

While a downed economy has decreased annual demand for gasoline as the summer travel season comes to an end, the price decreases for gasoline can largely be attributed to an increase in domestic supply.

At any other time in our history, given today's world events, our gas prices would be pushing \$4 a gallon. Especially with the ongoing recession, American energy production has thankfully increased in recent years, and gas prices have decreased.

While some in Washington would like to credit the Federal Government with the increased supply, the truth is that the vast majority of this domestic production has occurred in spite of Federal actions, not because of them.

The great majority of the production has occurred on private and State-owned lands and has been the result of technological enhancements that have made shale gas and oil reserves more attainable.

Specifically, this increase in production stems from the combination of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing. Pennsylvania, for example, is currently third in State production of natural gas. The Commonwealth has produced 3.2 trillion cubic feet in 2013 alone.

Increased production has bolstered domestic energy supplies and directly led to historically low natural gas prices across the U.S. This comes on the heels of alltime high prices in 2008 of about \$12. Production in Pennsylvania has provided royalty payments to landowners, while contributing significant funds to counties.

Madam Speaker, private and State-owned lands have changed the face of energy production and affordability in our country. The Federal Government would stand to gain by following suit. This starts with opening up new areas of Federal lands, both onshore and offshore, for the production of our natural resources.

These resources belong to the people. There is no reason the administration should continue to play games with energy security. Over the last 4 years, the House has made a priority of moving legislation that would increase our domestic energy production supply.

Just this past September, the House passed H.R. 2, which was a combination of 13 energy-related bills, among them is the Keystone XL pipeline, increasing the amount of permitted onshore and offshore lands for development, along with streamlining cumbersome energy permitting regulations. The bill sets timelines for agencies' permitting decisions and would provide for more pipelines and liquefied natural gas exports.

Many of these actions can be taken by the executive branch, but the administration has not acted. As we have witnessed in recent years, through the development of private lands, increasing our domestic energy supplies and encouraging American production will have a positive impact on energy prices here at home.

Increased domestic energy production of oil and natural gas has eased the financial pain at the pump. This is also welcome as temperatures drop and the home heating season has begun.

The bottom line is the government can do much more to influence energy prices for American consumers. The time for the administration to act is long overdue.

THE EXTRAORDINARY COST OF ALZHEIMER'S

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, I want today to talk about an illness that affects every American family. It is an illness that is devastating. It is Alzheimer's and related dementia. It is the most expensive illness in America today, and it will become even more expensive in the future.

Today, \$1 out of \$5 spent by Medicare is spent treating Alzheimer's, most expensive of all our illnesses. As we look to the future, we are going to find that this disease, Alzheimer's, is going to grow over \$1.5 trillion of costs by 2050, partly due to the baby boomers and their growth in the demography of this Nation, but also because of the extraordinary expense that this illness brings to us.

This is the power curve that we are looking at. If you are concerned about the deficit, you need to be concerned about Alzheimer's. If you are concerned about the American family, you need to be concerned about Alzheimer's.

Here is what we are looking at for what is the second biggest cost in the Federal budget, that is, Medicare and Medicaid. Here is the growth that we are looking over the period of the next 35 years, from some \$122 billion to over \$880 billion.

As you look at the Federal budget in the years ahead, as you look at Medicare, as you begin to think about the deficit that confronts this Nation, this is where you need to look because this is where the big expenditure is going to be made. It is going to be in Alzheimer's and related illnesses to it. This is it.

What can we do about this? We could sit and fuss and fume, we can take care of our seniors, or we can recognize the reality of what it means when we spend money on research, when we spend money on getting ahead of the illnesses. These are the major illnesses that confront America today.

You can take a look here. Breast cancer, there has been a decrease in mortality; prostate cancer, a decrease; heart disease, a 16 percent decrease; stroke, a 23 percent decrease; and of course, HIV/AIDS, an extraordinary 42 percent decrease in the deaths from these major illnesses.

Over here on the purple one on the right, Alzheimer's. Decrease? No. Increase? Sixty-eight percent increase from 2000 to 2010.

This is the reality of the most prevalent and most expensive and the most devastating disease that confronts Americans and really the rest of the world.

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What can we do about it?

Let's take a look at this chart. Alzheimer's spending treatment versus research. Let's see. We are spending \$150 billion on the treatment. This is Medicare and Medicaid, and research, oh, way down here, \$566 million on research.

So if you want to drive the deficit to even greater depths, treat but don't do research. However, if you want to solve this problem, we know how to do it. In fact, we have done it many, many times.

If you take a look at cancer, we are spending \$5.418 billion on cancer research. Cancer deaths are down. HIV, we are spending \$2.978 billion on HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS deaths are down by 42 percent. Cardiovascular, \$2 billion. Cardiovascular deaths, strokes and heart disease down. Alzheimer's, \$566 million.

We know the answer. The question is whether we are willing to put our money where we can solve the most devastating, the most prevalent, and the most expensive of all illnesses.

Change this little purple, bring it back up perhaps to \$2 billion a year, as we do with HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular, and cancer. Spend the research money. We are close in many, many ways across this Nation with programs that are under way.

Here is the specific ask that I make to this Congress: not \$2 billion, but \$200 million additional money in the appropriations that we are doing today—\$200 million.

BRAIN HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tremendous work of the Center for Brain Health at the University of Texas at Dallas and its Brain Performance Institute. Not only do their programs and research benefit the public, they have a team that specifically focuses on serving Active Duty servicemembers, veterans, military spouses, and caregivers.

More than 2.5 million men and women have admirably worn the uniform to protect America's freedom since 9/11. Sadly, nearly 20 percent of them come back from Iraq and Afghanistan with PTSD or major depression. More than 250,000 servicemembers have sustained a traumatic brain injury in the last decade.

This ring that I wear is a sobering reminder that 22 servicemembers or veterans commit suicide each and every day. Something has to be done to help these heroes battle their inner enemies, and that is where the Brain Health team comes in.

The Brain Health team is dedicated to creating public and private partnerships to not only eliminate the stigma often associated with PTSD or TBI, but to improve treatment and access to that treatment. This team is essentially retraining brains to build their resilience, regeneration, and reverse losses in mental capacity, giving these men and women the opportunity to overcome the trauma of war and pursue a happy and healthy future.

The Center for Brain Health and Brain Performance has provided scientifically proven programs to more than 500 warriors in seven States, including my home State of Texas. The institute's service to our troops is outstanding. They are the perfect example of America's commitment to take care of our warriors and their families, and I am proud to recognize their good works.

In God we trust.

THE 43 MURDERED MEXICAN STUDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. VELA. Madam Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the massacre of 43 students in Mexico.

Edmund Burke said:

All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.

On September 26, students from a teacher training college visited Iguala, Mexico, to participate in a protest. According to media reports, the students were arrested by police forces and handed over to a criminal gang. Their burned bodies have reportedly been found discarded in a river.

As The Washington Post reported yesterday:

The demand to find the students and punish those responsible for their disappearance has broadened into a more diverse fury about corrupt politicians and their drug-trafficking cronies.

Mexican prosecutors have formally charged former Iguala Mayor Jose Luis Abarca in the disappearance of the students. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. In the last several months, three constituent families of mine have been touched by murder in northern Mexico.

I again call on the United States State Department to ensure that the Mexican Government thoroughly investigates these atrocities and that those responsible be brought to justice and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The crises of human smuggling, drug smuggling, and illegal migration do not begin or end at the border. Resolving these matters requires that we address issues of economic development and cartel violence in Mexico and that we address the demand for narcotics in the United States, along with eliminating the presence of cartels in an estimated 1,000 U.S. cities.

The leaders of the State Department in Washington, D.C., need to understand that this is one of the most pressing foreign policy issues confronting our Nation. Otherwise, evil will indeed triumph.

INCREASE OF VIOLENT ATTACKS IN ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, a strong Israel means a strong United States, and a strong United States means a strong Israel. That is why I want to offer my condolences to the families of the Israelis murdered by Palestinian terrorists in Jerusalem yesterday.

The increase in these attacks is a grim reminder of the need for the United States—now, more than ever—to stand side by side in support of Israel and its right to defend itself and her citizens. I condemn these terror attacks, and I call on President Obama and leaders of other responsible nations to do the same and to hold Abu Mazen and the Palestinian leadership accountable for these actions.

We must recognize the importance of U.S.-Israel cooperation across a wide spectrum of areas, but particularly our cooperation on security and defense issues.

In the past year, I have had the opportunity to not only see firsthand what our joint efforts have produced with the Iron Dome antimissile defense system, but also why this is such an important venture. Last August, I led a congressional delegation trip to Israel to discuss our bilateral relationship with Prime Minister Netanyahu and other top-ranking Israeli officials. The

one thing that we heard repeatedly in almost every meeting was how thankful the Israelis were for the United States Congress' continued support for the Iron Dome and other defense missile systems and our belief in Israel's need to maintain its qualitative military edge over its enemies.

Iron Dome has become known for its accuracy after its remarkable performance in 2012, especially in November of that year during Operation Pillar of Defense, when Hamas terrorists fired thousands of rockets indiscriminately into Israeli civilian populations. The sheer numbers were astounding, and the rate of success is a testament to the U.S.-Israeli cooperation.

So when we arrived in Israel in August of 2013, less than a year after Pillar of Defense, one of the first things that Prime Minister Netanyahu said to us was:

Thank you for Iron Dome. It truly saved countless innocent Israeli lives.

We visited a deployed Iron Dome battery in northern Israel to see this remarkable piece of technology. We also met the incredible young men and women of the Israeli Defense Forces who operate the Iron Dome batteries. It was impressive and inspiring to see how well these young people handled the weight of such an incredible burden, but that is a testament to the Jewish people and to Israel.

The next time I witnessed firsthand the importance of Iron Dome was just this past summer, Madam Speaker. We were in Israel and in Jordan to get a better understanding of the situation in the Middle East. We had arrived in the region about 2 weeks after the news that Hamas had kidnapped three Israeli teens, Eyal, Naftali, and Gilad. We were in Israel the day that the heart-wrenching news came out that the bodies of these three young boys had been found riddled with bullets in the territories. It was an incredible moment of sadness, of loss, of despair for the entire nation, and we grieved with them when we attended the funeral of the three teenagers.

But Israel had no time to grieve over its loss of these three because Hamas had been engaged in rocket attacks against Israel that began when the three boys were abducted and murdered. Their intensity increased as the search began; and once Israel found the bodies, Hamas began firing rockets, hundreds of rockets into innocent Israeli civilian populations.

Amid the constant barrage of rockets and the continual blares of warning sirens, Iron Dome once again proved its worth and importance. It successfully shot down rocket after rocket aimed at the Israeli people over the course of the latest operation called Protective Edge.

The performance of Iron Dome, Madam Speaker, shows how great both Israeli and American technology and expertise are, and why it is vitally important that our two countries continue to work together on projects